

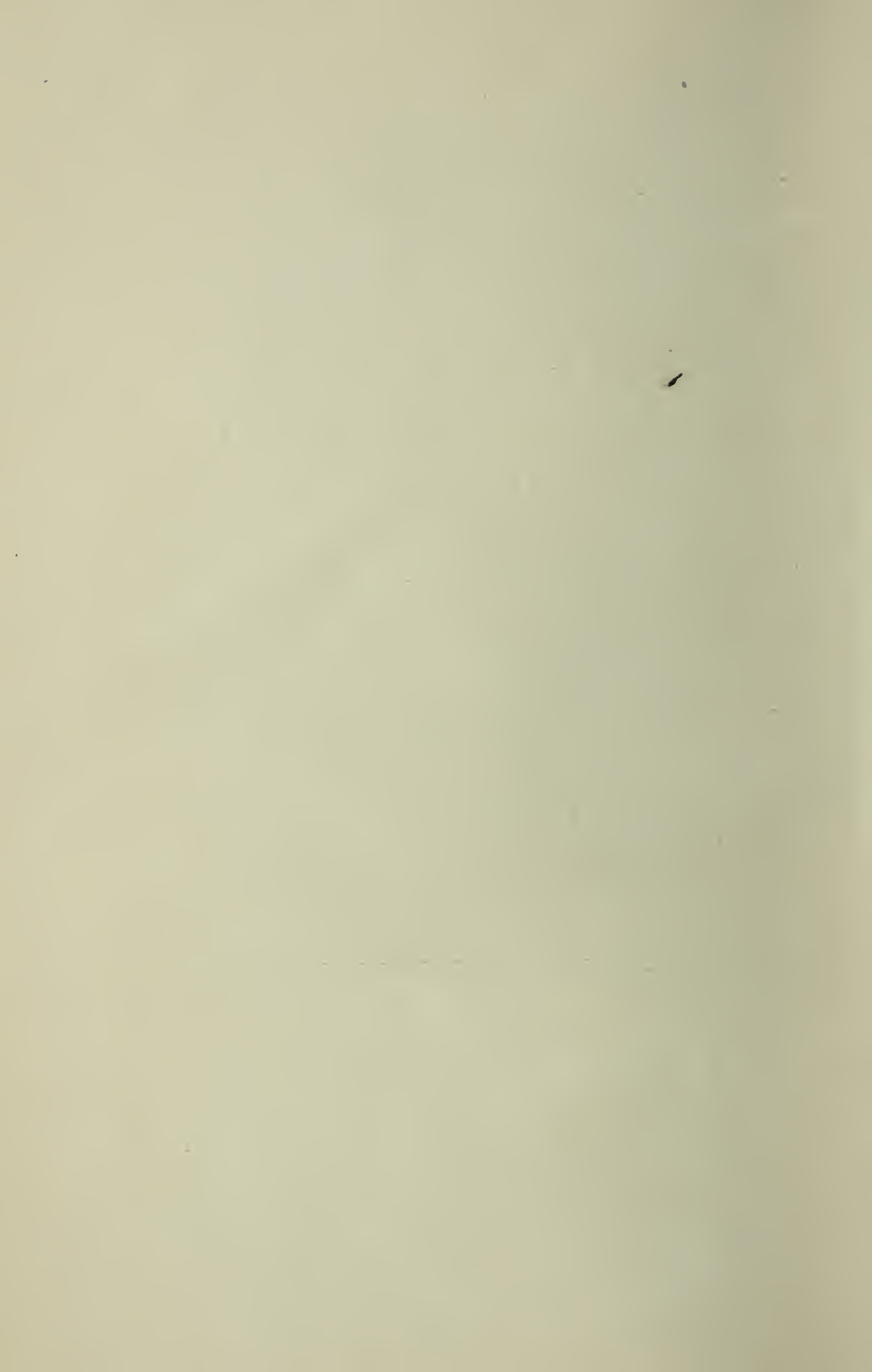
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HISTORY AND MEANING
OF THE PROPOSED NEW CHARTER
FOR CAMBRIDGE

OCTOBER 24, 1911

BY
LEWIS JEROME JOHNSON

[REPRINTED FROM PROCEEDINGS OF THE CAMBRIDGE
HISTORICAL SOCIETY, VI]



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HISTORY AND MEANING OF THE PROPOSED NEW
CHARTER FOR CAMBRIDGE

MR. PRESIDENT, Ladies and Gentlemen: I am afraid I may have to offer the history and meaning of the proposed new Cambridge charter in a somewhat intertwined form; there will be some "history" and I hope some "meaning." I think possibly, however, they will run along together without confusion.

The history of the Cambridge charter might include the history of the democratic movement in government which has been going on for centuries. But I am sure that I shall have your approval if I skip these centuries and come down at once to the last decade, and even perhaps to the last two years. In the last ten years most significant progress has been made in devising means for improving American city government. The last decade is, in fact, the most interesting one in our history in this respect. It is gratifying to us who love our old Massachusetts traditions that this decade seems to be making effective the hopes and aspirations which we in Massachusetts have held for generations. It is gratifying to be able to reflect that our purposes and ideals have been correct all the time and that defective details in the machinery account in the main for not securing the ends desired. From the experience of the last two decades, and of the last decade particularly, we have learned how to correct some of the worst of these mistakes. This seems particularly clear to me because it falls within the line of my profession, that of an engineer. Our purpose was fine, but defects in details have become evident. What to do seems clear.

These four lines from the Bill of Rights of the Constitution of Massachusetts, adopted a century and a third ago, express in a few words, which cannot be bettered to-day, what our purpose was and I believe is still:

“ART. VII. Government is instituted for the common good; for the protection, safety, prosperity, and happiness of the people; and not for the profit, honor, or private interest of any one man, family, or class of men.”

But the private interests of various men have found numerous ways to creep in and gain precedence in government — in cities and States and in the nation. They have intrenched themselves in the institutions set up to keep them in check. What was worked out — the checks and balances, and all the rest — was a system which conceivably might work if economic conditions never put temptations in men's way and if various other things were so which are not. But, be that as it may, it is a system which has notoriously failed to produce the desired results, particularly in our cities. One of our chief national causes for disappointment has been the government of our cities, but to-day we think we see pretty good reasons why that failure has occurred. In my opinion, we started by misunderstanding the nature of the city problem. We have been firm in the faith that our form of city government must be in the main correct because it involves the federal form of checks and balances, the Montesquieu fetich, fascination with which was one of the worst of the fathers' errors. Open to grave question as this principle is in general, it is particularly unsuited to city organization. For city government is mainly executive, and efficiency, simplicity, and responsiveness to the public will would seem obviously to be prime requisites. But, unfortunately, as our cities developed, we thoughtlessly applied to them the federal form of government. Results were bad. For decades we contented ourselves by scolding our good citizens because they did not make this old arrangement work. We assumed that if anything of so respectable an origin did not work some *person* must be to blame. We see, however, that something else must be done. We are coming to see that it is but a waste of time and energy trying to beseech and scold our best citizens into jumping to the task of making the venerable system work. It might work, I admit, if everybody were a sort of Columbus for daring, and a St. Thomas for self-abnegation. But our citizens are not all of such a type. Meanwhile the same old system has gone right on doing its harm.

In order to start the American citizen straight on this thing, it

required a physical catastrophe of appalling magnitude. When the waters had subsided from a devastated city, the people of Galveston saw that something both intelligent and radical had to be done. The politicians stepped aside at once. They said, "While ordinary conditions suit our purposes finely, heaven knows there is nothing in this situation for us; we surrender." So there was appointed a commission of five men to succeed them, violating tradition after tradition, and discarding particularly those happy havens for inefficiency and corruption, the double chamber system and divided powers. These results were so good that the neighboring city of Houston said, "Well, if that thing works so well in the wrecked city of Galveston, why can it not work well in a city that is not yet destroyed?" and so they followed suit in Houston, and so it has gone on from those beginnings right through the country. The form of city government which has constantly and persistently been getting American cities into trouble is clearly doomed. We shall doubtless have a wide range of experiments in the search for improvement, but it looks as if it would be pretty hard to get far away from the so-called commission form.

The Galveston charter discarded the old form, root and branch, and put all the powers of the city into the hands of a single board of five responsible persons, elected at large, and thus established concentration of power and responsibility. That was an enormous stride forward. From the point of view of efficiency, it covered the ground. It also attained simplicity.

Now, the spread of this sort of thing throughout the country was greatly hastened by the work of Des Moines. There they retained the simplicity and efficiency of the Galveston form, but added a new, though, for permanently good results, probably indispensable feature, the power of direct popular control of the commission through the Initiative and Referendum and Recall. This gives what should be an effective means of controlling the city business, however the officers may be elected. In Galveston the way it has worked out, the publicity and conspicuousness attending all that these five men do, has been such as to produce admirable results. In Des Moines they not only have all that, but have secured more; they have the Initiative, by which the people can pass a measure over the head of the council; the Referendum, by which the people

can, by popular vote, veto an act of the city council ; and the Recall, whereby the people can remove a commissioner from office before the expiration of his term.

Now, that Des Moines charter was adopted in 1907 and went into effect in 1908. The germination of the seed that was planted in Galveston in 1901 had been comparatively slow ; the growth was bound to come, but other cities were getting the news and beginning to think. The word came to Cambridge and this vicinity largely through President Eliot. He, as some of you will recollect, returning from a trip that he had been making among the Texas cities, told of the marvelous results that had been obtained, principally in Houston. He reported asking one of the commissioners how they could build all those schoolhouses and build all those streets, and all that without a bond issue and with a reduction in the tax rate. The commissioner's reply, " We are getting a dollar's worth of government for each dollar's worth of taxes collected," arrested attention. This kind of news was being carried elsewhere and was taking effect. The spread of the commission form of government then began in earnest, and became so rapid, and is now so rapid, that we do not hope to keep the literature for our charter campaign up to date ; it is changing so fast that I think our latest literature is already somewhat behind the times. This movement progresses in spite of the combined opposition, generally, of the political machines of both parties and of all the other special interests that profit by a bad city government. There are those in a community who like to have the city administration run with a little favoritism here and there, and sometimes with a great deal of favoritism. They naturally make a point of standing in with the political machines of both parties.

Fine as the results had already been, and high as was the perfection in form after the Des Moines contribution, it seemed clear that it would do no harm for us in Cambridge to bide our time for a while. Better things still were likely to develop.

Two years ago, the little city of Grand Junction in Colorado had scarcely been heard of ; but, like many another small place, it was destined to have a marked effect on the thought and practice of men. Two years ago, Grand Junction adopted a new charter of the commission sort, including all the good features of the Des

Moines plan, but introduced a new system of electing officers — an attractive system of preferential voting. This seemed to certain citizens of Cambridge to be the capsheaf, so to speak, of the developing form of city charter. It then looked to them as if energy, experience, and political genius had developed what we might safely assume to be the standard modern form of American city charter. It looked then as if we might assume that the type of construction best adapted for the purpose, so far as our experience would permit it, had been worked out; and the question at once arose, Would it not be a pretty good thing to give the citizens of Cambridge an opportunity to adopt an up-to-date charter of this kind? It was in the fall of 1909 that that form of election was developed and tested. The previous lack of so important an improvement was no doubt the reason why the Cambridge commission charter movement had not developed before. The appearance of preferential voting is, at all events, the main cause for this charter's coming up at this time, and since it is the greatest novelty of the charter, perhaps it will be appropriate for me to devote special attention to it.

There seems to be universal agreement that the proper method of nomination is by non-partisan petition of a moderate number of voters — the number of signatures put as low as possible consistent with decorum. The idea is to give unorganized bodies of voters the least possible difficulty in putting a favorite in nomination. This allows the nominations to be perfectly free and open to any candidate for whom there could be any hope of election. In Los Angeles one hundred signatures secure a nomination; in Spokane, twenty-five; in Des Moines, twenty-five; in Lynn and Haverhill, twenty-five; in fact, twenty-five is the usual figure. This results at once in the nomination of a large number of candidates; then the dilemma to settle is, which candidates should win? Obviously it would not do to let all of these candidates go on the ballot, and leave it in the usual way for a plurality, which might, after all, be only a small fraction of the voters, to decide the issue. Such a decision might or might not be acceptable or endurable to the majority. When a candidate is elected by a minority, nobody knows whether he is on the whole the preference of the majority or not. Mayor Barry, for example, at the last election had less than half the votes cast for mayor. His vote, though a plurality, was a minority,

his two opponents having together more votes than he. The same is true of Mayor Fitzgerald of Boston. He had 47,172 votes; his three opponents together, 48,184. A more striking illustration of the absurdity of the old system occurred in a recent election in Salem, when Mayor Howard was elected by 1800 votes out of a total of 7200. There were five candidates, the vote was close, and 1800 sufficed for a plurality and an election. Nobody knew whether Mayor Howard was the man the citizens of Salem wanted or not. To win by this system one need only to be the favorite of the largest single group or organization. Nothing could be more dangerous. We have hitherto striven against this danger, and by one arbitrary means or another kept the number of nominees low — a practice directly in violation of the cardinal democratic principle of readily secured nominations and a wide choice for the electorate. The excessive number of 5000 signatures required in Boston arose no doubt partly from the fancied necessity of keeping its number of nominees down. Setting the required number of signatures low forced a radical change in practice. The expected, desired, and resulting large number of nominees made it absolutely necessary.

So what they did in Des Moines was to resort to the system of double elections, long familiar in western Europe, — to have two elections instead of one, — a primary and a final election, each requiring an election day. At the primary election the names of all the candidates appear on the ballot, arranged alphabetically or by lot, and each voter puts a cross after the name of his first choice for an office. The two highest candidates then appear on the final ballot some days or weeks later, all the rest having been dropped, and the voters are forced to choose between these two. This is the plurality system, thinly disguised, with a great premium on organization and machine work.

In Grand Junction they said: "What is the use of two elections? Cannot we manage this with one election and do it a great deal more neatly and safely, besides? We will arrange it so that the voter can mark not only his first and second choice for any one office, but as many "other choices" as he likes. This will enable the voter to support every one of perhaps a large number of good candidates, as against the machine or undesirable candidates. It will also destroy largely or entirely the great advantage long en-

BALLOT ILLUSTRATING PREFERENTIAL VOTING

As Embodied in the Proposed New Charter for Cambridge, Mass.

INSTRUCTIONS.—To vote for a candidate make a cross (X) in the appropriate space.

Vote your FIRST choice in the FIRST column.

Vote your SECOND choice in the SECOND column.

Vote ONLY ONE FIRST choice and ONLY ONE SECOND choice for any one office.

Vote in the THIRD column for ALL THE OTHER CANDIDATES whom you wish to support.

DO NOT VOTE MORE THAN ONE CHOICE FOR ONE PERSON, as only one choice will count for any candidate.

If you wrongly mark, tear or deface this ballot, return it and obtain another.

ONE MAN TO BE ELECTED FOR EACH OFFICE

Supervisor of Administration (Mayor)	First Choice	Second Choice	Other Choices
Charles E. Hughes			
Champ Clark			
John A. O'Gorman			
Nelson W. Aldrich			
Richard Croker			
Robert L. Owen			
William H. Taft			
Joseph W. Folk			
Robert M. LaFollette			
Woodrow Wilson			
William J. Bryan			
Chauncey M. Depew			
Theodore Roosevelt			
Supervisor of Finance			
Bourke Cockran			
Leslie B. Shaw			
John A. Sullivan			
Nathan Matthews			

Supervisor of Public Works	First Choice	Second Choice	Other Choices
Guy C. Emerson			
John Mitchell			
Stephen O'Meara			
Supervisor of Health			
H. W. Wiley			
Supervisor of Public Property			
Gifford Pinchot			
Richard A. Ballinger			

joyed by the machine, and, moreover, eliminate the objection to a large number of candidates."

The sample ballot (page 59) which has been distributed shows how the ballot would actually look.

Now, this method of election not only does away with primaries, but it does a number of things besides. It means that a man may accept nomination for office without there being incumbent upon him the necessity for spending money, without even making a speech if he does not want to. Now we well know that some of the most desirable candidates, particularly for city office, are not speech-makers and cannot or do not wish to spend money, and above all things do not wish to put themselves in the position of having their motives misunderstood or misrepresented, or go out asking for votes. Under this ballot a large number of nominees appear, and it is of no consequence, presumably, that any particular one should win. It is important only that some one of the right type should win. Under the old system the candidate's failure is his party's failure, something supposed by his supporters to bring great disappointment and harm. The new system eliminates that excess of strain and responsibility upon the candidate. No one man is singled out as a target for abuse or mud-slinging, unless, at least, the case against him is pretty strong. In fact, the incentive is the other way. Unnecessary offense to voters whose second or other choice votes, if not first, are being angled for, is obviously to be avoided. In short, it goes a long way toward solving the problem of making standing for office attractive to the right kind of citizens, whom we have found it hitherto hard to attract.

Another thing that this ballot does will be a relief to the much berated element which has ideals, conscientious scruples, and differences of opinion which lead to splits and which handicap them so severely in any effort against unscrupulous solidarity. It enables any body of voters automatically, quietly, and painlessly to get together behind some candidate more or less perfectly representing the general views of that group. It practically eliminates the danger, usually fatal, of a split ticket, avoided readily enough by steam-roller methods of a machine, but not so easily avoided by people with scruples, self-respect, and pride.

Now those who feel hopeful of getting decent city government in this country base their hope on the faith that those who want the city

run right are in the majority, divided usually, however, into hostile camps by party lines based on nothing more important than which of two factions shall hold the city jobs and hand out the city favors. Now, if we can eliminate the false party issue and get the majority of the city together, as has been found possible in other cities, we shall have accomplished a great thing. With this ballot the number of candidates may be large and include plenty of the best of all parties or no party, and in this way somebody satisfactory to the majority is sure to win if there is anybody in the list who is sufficiently well and favorably known to secure the support of the majority; and if there is not, we get the next best thing, and the best possible with that list of nominees; that is, the candidate who among all the others commands the largest following after a free and full expression of choice by the voters. The voter, no longer limited to one choice, no longer has to treat all other acceptable candidates just as he does the most objectionable men in the list. Thus, numerous candidates will no longer split up the votes of a majority and contribute to the election of a plurality man who is earnestly opposed by the majority. With the proposed ballot each voter may vote for as many of the nominees as he likes and a plurality election cannot be obtained in defiance of the wishes of the majority, unless all the candidates are objectionable.

The ballot that has been handed around has on it the names of thirteen candidates for mayor. I will improvise a ballot here to show how the marking is done.

For Mayor	First Choice	Second Choice	Other Choices
Smith			X
Doe	X		
Mason			
Sikes			
Roe			X
Asquith			
Jones		X	
Robinson			X

I suppose there is a list of eight candidates as shown. The arrangement of names is, as prescribed by the proposed charter, by lot, and not alphabetically.

The voter's task is this: He notes the name of candidate Doe, whom he prefers on the whole to any of the others. So he votes a first choice for him by putting a cross in the first column after his name. Then, being one of the right kind of citizen, conscientious and devoted to the good of the city, he looks further and notes that there are other good men nominated: that if Doe should not win there would be no calamity. Jones is a good, satisfactory sort of man. He would put him next. So he votes a second choice for Jones by putting a cross in the second column after his name. Then there are Robinson, Smith, and Roe. They are also competent and acceptable men. He does not want to vote against them, and so he votes an "other choice" for each of them by marking for them in the third column. Note that he is not facing the usually impossible task of grading them in the order of his preference. This ballot makes it as easy as possible to vote for all his kind of candidates. There may be only one or two thoroughly objectionable candidates, and they should be thoroughly voted against by all the majority voters supporting *all* the majority type of candidate. The way it is likely to be is this: The boss knows very well that strength in the campaign does not lie in a multiplicity of nominees for the same office, and he therefore will very likely be successful in keeping candidates among his faithful down to one or two. A rival boss or two may put in candidates. The clientèle of such candidates are likely to bullet — to vote for their own men and no others — and split the selfish vote. The grafter is likely to want one candidate and no other, for personal reasons, and so will vote no second or other choices for fear of beating his first choice. The other element are met by no such dilemma. They should mark freely for all good candidates, and their victory is doubly assured — by being probably in a majority anyway, and by facing a factionally and selfishly divided enemy. Here is the opportunity for self-respecting, conscientious persons to get together in such a way as to save the votes of each and every one of them. When the votes are counted, they may find to their surprise, as in Grand Junction, that for the first time

in the memory of men they have won, and deservedly. If you will look at the little slip which has been passed around, you will see how it worked out. The slip runs as follows:

PRACTICAL WORKING OF PREFERENTIAL VOTING

GRAND JUNCTION, COLORADO, NOVEMBER 2, 1909

Total number of ballots cast	1,847
Necessary for a majority	924

RESULT OF THE VOTES FOR MAYOR

	1st Choice	2d Choice	Other Choices	Combined 1st's and 2d's	Combined 1st's, 2d's, Others
D. W. Aupperle . . .	465	143	145	608	753
* W. H. Bannister . .	603	93	43	696	739
N. A. Lough . . .	99	231	328	330	658
* E. B. Lutes . . .	41	114	88	155	243
E. M. Slocomb . . .	229	357	326	586	912
Thomas M. Todd (Elected)	362	293	396	655	1,051
	<hr/> 1,799	<hr/> 1,231	<hr/> 1,326		

The two starred candidates for mayor, Bannister and Lutes, represented factions of the reactionary interests against whom the new charter was aimed, the former being the strong candidate of that sort. The progressive opposition was divided and put up four candidates for the place. The situation was much the same as in the first election under the new Boston charter — with the striking difference that out there, Bannister, the Fitzgerald of that situation, did *not* get elected, as the result of the divided opposition, or otherwise. There were 1847 votes cast, and in order to win this election a person must have a majority (924) in first choices; or, failing that, must have the highest number of firsts and seconds combined, provided it is a majority; and failing that, the one getting the highest total of all choices would win. The thoroughly objectionable candidate led in first choices, as was to be expected under the circumstances, and under our Massachusetts way of doing things, he would have been regarded the winner. But, as the figures show, he had only a few over a third of the voters behind him. The vote was nearly two to one against him.

Still I find it very difficult to make Cambridge politicians see why Bannister should not win. They not unnaturally profess to feel outraged that so strong a candidate was not seated. You will see that his opposition of about 1150 voters were simply divided into three or four camps, but, thanks to the form of election, they suffered no penalty and secured a mayor acceptable to them, with two other candidates leading their arch enemy Bannister.

To be more precise at this important point, and at the risk of repeating to a slight extent for the sake of perfect clearness, I wish to add the following few comments on that election.

The starred men were the anti-charter and minority candidates ; the others the pro-charter and majority candidates.

Omitting reference to the Grand Junction practice of "dropping the low man," — an unessential complication, not likely to be widely adopted, and without influence on this result, — the decision was drawn from the foregoing figures as follows:

There being no majority in First Choices, the Firsts and Seconds were added together. Then the leading candidate, Bannister, provided he had had a majority, would have won.

There being no majority by combined Firsts and Seconds, the First, Second and Other Choices were added together, and Todd, the candidate then leading, won.

Under the usual system the minority would have beaten the majority and elected Bannister.

Under the Berkeley, Des Moines, Haverhill, or Lynn plan, that of second elections, there would have resulted a bitter contest between Aupperle and Bannister, and a forced choice between two candidates, neither of whom had a majority of the people behind him. Moreover the practical certainty of having to go through such a campaign in order to be elected may well deter most men of the desirable sort from accepting a nomination. Such an ordeal is no legitimate test of fitness for office. It has few terrors for the cheap self-seeker, but does deter the candidates we need. It is one of the great evils of our old style politics from which the system of second elections does not free us, but which the preferential system in great measure, at least, destroys.

One of the features of all our charter meetings is to hold a mock election which shows exactly how this new system of election

works. When this method of voting was first proposed, we used to hear occasional remarks about its being complicated. At the suggestion of a lady much interested in the charter, it was proposed that we make a practice from the start of giving the voters an opportunity actually to vote such a ballot. This had the expected effect. No talk of the ballot being complicated ever comes from a voter who has had a chance to try it. The only opposition left is that readily ascribable to a firm belief that it would actually work as intended. In other words, the opposition is now confined to the machine politicians, and those in their train. Even they make little effort to make it appear that it is complicated.

You will now be given an opportunity to hold such a mock election, using the ballots which have been distributed. One vote in the first column for first choice; one vote in the second column for second choice. You are not compelled to vote against your second and other choices, as under the present system. With only one vote you have to treat all but your first choice — good, bad, and indifferent — alike; and under the new system of nominations there may be a dozen in the running for whom you would be prouder to vote than any that come up under the present system. This ballot enables a voter to vote for all candidates of an acceptable type and against all candidates of other types, and thus, with the direct nomination power, for the first time to express himself satisfactorily at the polls. All this ought to help to arouse interest in politics among those who have lost it, or who, for better reason than they were aware of, never could get interested.

Will you please mark your ballots?

If the ballots are ready and if you will be good enough to pass them to the aisles they will be collected and counted. It will not take very long to produce the results.¹

We observe that the prime reason that the public will has not prevailed in our cities is because selfish interests have succeeded in getting in between the people and their business. Those minor interests generally operate through the political party machine. Now the machine is a necessity under our cumbersome system.

¹ The result of this mock election was soon reached by tellers and announced to the audience. The result was of no permanent value and so is not recorded, but the experiment appeared to give complete satisfaction to the meeting.

The traditional ramshackle form of government could not be run without it. But its largely irresponsible character, its great power, and its need for money make it a tempting mark and in many cases an easy prey for those who find cash returns in making the city government serve their private ends to the injury of the mass of citizens.

To correct this kind of evil the system of nomination above described goes a long way. The elimination of the party label helps also. Together they go far to destroy monopoly of nominations. The preferential ballot strikes at the likelihood of electing such candidates as the machines put on the ballot, and brings into the field against them citizens of a type whom it was perfectly unreasonable to ask to run under the old system.

To back up all this the short ballot principle is introduced. This greatly aids the voter, and still further works against the machine system. The idea on which the short ballot is based is to fill by popular election so few offices and only such important and conspicuous ones as will get and hold the critical interest of the voter. The five supervisors proposed in this charter, in place of the thirty-four now chosen by popular vote to do the same work, fall in with this principle — and this point is much intensified by the fact that they go out of office only one or two per year, leaving only one or two to be elected in any one year, and, including the school committee, only three to four city offices to be filled by the voters in any one year. The ballots as passed around, calling for the filling of all five supervisors at one election, would appear only at the first election under the charter.

Under the proposed charter, five supervisors replace the mayor, board of aldermen, and common council — thirty-four men in all — and have all the executive and legislative powers of the city, save such as are reserved to the school committee and the people themselves, as I will explain later. Any fifty citizens can put on the ballot the name of the candidate acceptable to them, and he accepts the nomination on just as good terms as any body of politicians can confer. There is no party label to float the nominees into power in the face of incompetence, previous obscurity, or bad record.

All this puts the government right into the hands of the people,

with fair hope of success. With men in positions of great publicity, the opportunity to get credit for good work is a powerful incentive. The spirit of this modern democratic movement is that human nature is pretty sure to be sound, but that it should be given at least half a chance. If we put these carefully selected men in a position of power, where the good they do will be appreciated and credited to the right ones, we shall get good results. There is an opportunity for good to be done, some of it long neglected, in any city. Cambridge is no exception.

Then, under the proposed charter, the people themselves are given power, if anything seriously objectionable happens or is threatened, to step in and exert direct control of their business, through the Initiative, Referendum, and Recall. These are the best means that have been devised for such emergency work, and they have already done great service in this country and elsewhere. They furnish the means for final and effective control that the public requires for its safety.

Then we provide a reasonably long term for these supervisors, three years, in which a man can learn his business and work out and execute a policy. We propose to pay a salary large enough so that men of the type generally believed to be capable of doing this work could at least live on it. Then, by this system of elections, by which a man can take a nomination with a minimum of risk to peace of mind, pocket, or reputation, we could hope to get the right kind of man into office. We have given them great power to do desirable things, and the least possible power to do undesirable things. We have arranged it so that credit would go to whom credit is due. We have arranged it so that the government and the citizens shall be in the closest possible relations, so that citizens with right purposes can be of the greatest possible effectiveness with the least possible sacrifice. This will train the citizens to increasing efficiency, and make good results permanent, and in large degree self-sustaining.

In this charter we have brought together all the best features of work of the last decade of American city charter making, carefully adapted to Cambridge and Massachusetts conditions.

We have in this charter these characteristics which have been productive of nothing but success so far in this country, and it is

believed that they are sound principles, namely, simplicity, concentration of authority and responsibility, and responsiveness to the public will.

At this point it seems appropriate to record the names of the four others included with the speaker in the group of five who took it upon themselves to prepare the original draft of the charter and introduce it into the legislature in the session of 1910. They were Lawrence G. Brooks, Arthur N. Holcombe, John R. Nichols, and Russell A. Wood. F. Lowell Kennedy also gave the work cordial and important encouragement from the start, and appeared as one of the petitioners for the bills in the legislature. Messrs. Holcombe and Nichols, not at that time registered voters in Cambridge though since having become such, did not appear in the list of these four petitioners. Of course, many others, too numerous to mention here, and generally included in published lists of committees of the Charter Association, helped with encouragement and suggestions of the greatest value, but out of this long list no one who knows the high quality and great extent of his unheralded assistance as counselor and executive will grudge a special record here of the name of Reginald Mott Hull.

Now, as an illustration of how charters of this kind actually operate, the experience in Spokane may interest you. There is a city the size of Cambridge, with five offices to fill, each office with a four-year term, each with a five-thousand-dollar salary, requiring for nomination only twenty-five signatures. The result was ninety-two candidates for five offices, offering an adequate range of choice to the voters. The number of votes cast was 22,058; 7000 women had registered in the few months that had elapsed since their enfranchisement by the state. This was their first election of any kind, and the first experience of the men with this kind of ballot. There was no difficulty and no confusion. Of those ninety-two candidates, the five men who won had none of them held an elective city office. The politicians were down and out. The citizens for the first time in their history had a chance at something different and seized upon it. The highest man, Robert Fairley, got a majority of first-choice votes. He was the only one who did. Moreover, he had the support in first, second, or other choices of three quarters of the voters in the city. He had become widely

and favorably known as an appointive city officer. He had long served as city comptroller.

The four men next in favor were as follows:

No. 2 in popular choice, W. J. Hindley, was a leading Congregational clergyman. He had never been in public life before except as a leader in the single tax movement, and an active, virile defender of civic righteousness generally. A fine orator, and widely respected.

The next man, C. M. Fassett, was the President of the Spokane Chamber of Commerce, one of the most successful and most respected business men of the Northwest, like Mr. Hindley, a single-taxer. He was elected during his absence from the city, indicating a kind of politics we have not yet enjoyed in this part of the country. He took no part in the campaign beyond signing his acceptance of the nomination, and writing two or three letters home which were published in the local papers.

The next, D. C. Coates, had been a leader in the charter campaign, formerly Lieutenant-Governor of Colorado, member of a typographical union, a socialist who had won the respect and confidence of former opponents and of the public generally.

The fifth, L. A. Hayden, was a prominent lumberman, a very successful man of high ideals.

None of these four, by the way, was then sufficiently widely known to secure the votes of a majority, even upon the addition of first, second, and other choices.

The correspondent who furnished me the foregoing information was careful to point out that they were not only men of responsibility and standing, but they were men of high civic spirit, interested in the public good. Those five men were chosen, and the people were delighted not only with the result, but with the high tone of the campaign.

You do not strike a politician until you get to No. 13. Not only the first five, but the first twelve names in the list were names of people who had never been in elective office; they were men, successful in business and ordinary vocations, of a type quite different from the ordinary politician. The ex-mayor, the man who was mayor when the charter was adopted, was a man against whom little or nothing could be said, but he was a member of the old

regime and came in no better than thirteenth. No. 17 was the next of a similar type, and so on down. The fact remains that Spokane has had an entire change in the rules, and they are very pleased with it.

We may take a little satisfaction here in Cambridge from the fact that they adopted this preferential ballot in Spokane very largely because they knew it had obtained such favor here in Cambridge; it is very gratifying to me to feel that we here in Cambridge have helped teach the Pacific Slope progressivism. They simply worked out the charter and voted on it and got it into operation in a total campaign of six months. But there they require no action by the legislature for such a step. They have home rule for cities.

Here in Cambridge we mean that these five supervisors shall be elected to specific office. Each candidate knows what office he is to fill, and the voter knows to what office he is electing him. This is no attempt to elect experts, but to secure men interested in their departments, with a taste for their work, and in a position of responsibility to the voters for its execution. This is worth a moment's notice, for it is a somewhat new idea, but likely to gain in favor. Grand Junction, Lynn, and Oklahoma City already enjoy this system, and Haverhill's experience with the more usual system led Lynn to take the step. The usual practice has been to nominate the men and elect five of them merely to the council at random to parcel out the work among themselves as best they may — a practice tending to irresponsibility and inefficiency unless exceptional men are put in power.

Now, having devoted so much time to the history and contents of the proposed new charter for Cambridge, it becomes an easy and short task, in closing, to point out its meaning.

It opens the brightest opportunity we have ever had in this city for an actual realization of the principles laid down a century and a third ago in this city, on the soil of this University, by a graduate of this University, John Adams, and ratified by the people of this Commonwealth as the foundation of their organic law, namely:

“All power residing originally in the people, and being derived from them, the several magistrates and officers of government, vested with authority, whether legislative, executive, or judicial, are their substitutes and agents, and are at all times accountable to them. . . .

“In order to prevent those who are vested with authority from becoming oppressors, the people have a right, at such periods and in such manner as they shall establish by their frame of government, to cause their public officers to return to private life; and to fill up vacant places by certain and regular elections and appointments. . . .

“Government is instituted for the common good; for the protection, safety, prosperity, and happiness of the people; and not for the profit, honor, or private interest of any one man, family, or class of men.”

These are principles as impregnable to-day as when they were written. In fact, I think it may be said that their violation, particularly the violation of the last sentence quoted, is the cause in a nutshell of our political and economic troubles. I think we need no new doctrine, only effective ways to get the old doctrine into effect. To get the full result desired we must, in these later days, add two things, — more effective means for the use of the people in asserting their supremacy, and more favorable conditions for the development of the right leadership. The people must have more power to do with, and more knowledge what to do against those who would pervert government to the profit of some one man or set of men. This charter, I consider, includes as complete a list as is to-day practicable of what the people must have to secure the requisite power. The existence of this power, within the reach of all the citizens, will foster and develop the leadership, if anything will, — our great educational system, and the memory and example of the unselfish leaders of the past greatly assisting.

The nine striking features of the charter which, I believe, will operate so powerfully to bring into effect the purposes of our Massachusetts Bill of Rights are :

1. Direct and Easy Nominations, without regard to ward lines: to check party domination and give voters wide choice.
2. Short Ballot: to permit easy and intelligent voting.
3. Preferential Voting: to eliminate primaries, to encourage competent men to stand for office, and to permit a real choice from a large number of candidates, with minimum cost and effort.
4. Long Term and Adequate Salary: to render public office acceptable to competent men.
5. Small, compact Council with large powers, combining the executive and legislative functions: to secure efficiency.

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| 6. Publicity | } | to permit effective control of city affairs by
the voters. |
| 7. The Initiative | | |
| 8. The Referendum | | |
| 9. The Recall | | |

This list, if supplemented by two other items, would include about the whole that has been accomplished since the adoption of the constitution of this Commonwealth in the way of improved governmental machinery and practices, and little in this list dates in this country at least from before the last decade.

The two items which I have not mentioned and which it is a particular pleasure to mention here in this presence — in the presence of your President, Mr. Dana, who has so efficiently led in their adoption — are the merit system and the Australian ballot, and without the latter, at least, this charter could not have come to pass.

More still must be done to complete this kind of work in State and nation, and various corrupting economic fallacies and abuses must be eliminated from our thought and life before we can secure permanent security and peace, but, whatever form such work may take, I believe it is bound to be part and parcel with this charter in attempting to establish a government “for the common good ; for the protection, safety, prosperity, and happiness of the people ; and not for the profit, honor, or private interest of any one man, family, or class of men.”



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